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Commission on the Status of Women
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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: priority theme: women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development

Interactive dialogue among ministers on building alliances for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Chair's summary

1. At its 7th meeting, on 16 March 2016, the Commission on the Status of Women held an interactive dialogue among ministers on building alliances for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as a component of its ministerial segment.

2. The Secretary of Policies for Women's Work and Economic Autonomy of Brazil, Tatau Godinho, chaired the dialogue, and the Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, served as moderator. The dialogue opened with brief introductions by the Chair and the Moderator. Ministers and high-level officials from 21 Member States exchanged good practices, modalities, planned initiatives and other efforts to build alliances, and 10 representatives of non-governmental organizations contributed their perspectives. The dialogue concluded with closing comments from the Moderator and the Chair.

Role of alliances and partnerships

3. The participants unanimously recognized the importance of building alliances and partnerships with civil society and gave examples of practical collaboration and interaction at the national level.

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4. Participants confirmed that women and girls were drivers of change and that realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls was a universal commitment. They were of the view that, while all countries had challenges to address, much work had been done that could be built on for accelerated progress. They confirmed the political and strategic importance of partnerships to promote reform and influence policies and indicated that, in their countries, civil society engagement had contributed to the adoption of gender-sensitive legislation and enhanced decision-making and democratic processes. Examples of participation by civil society organizations in monitoring and accountability mechanisms were provided.

5. Participants provided their insights on and stressed the importance of safe and enabling environments for civil society to effectively contribute to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, including the importance of the legal status of and protection for civil society organizations to engage in their work. Adequate resources for national mechanisms for gender equality, as well as for women's organizations, were needed to broaden opportunities for intervention and action. A suggestion was made to channel resources from military expenditure to support the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment.

6. Speakers highlighted the roles and contributions of civil society and other stakeholders, including women's rights and feminist groups, women human rights defenders, grass-roots organizations, trade unions, religious leaders and faith-based organizations, academia and the private sector, to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and the realization of their human rights. Youth, especially young women, should be mobilized to work for gender equality, as should men and boys. The contributions of different stakeholders towards building political and social consensus for gender equality and women's empowerment and towards changing discriminatory social norms and cultural practices were stressed.

7. Speakers gave examples of consultative processes between government entities and civil society. In their view, while consultations and dialogue were not always easy, they were essential for change. Such processes ranged from informal settings to official hearings. In some countries, inclusive mechanisms consisting of representatives of Government, civil society and women's organizations and other stakeholders were in place. Interministerial coordination and the designation of gender focal points in different ministries working with civil society and other partners were mentioned, as was collaboration with bilateral donors and international organizations. The example of so-called women's rights diplomacy in international negotiations was provided.

8. The opportunity for dialogue within the Commission on the Status of Women was welcomed. Representatives from non-governmental organizations welcomed alliances and discussed a range of areas in which partnerships had made a difference in the lives of women and girls and in society as a whole.

Areas of alliances and partnerships

9. Participants highlighted opportunities for multi-stakeholder approaches towards achieving Goal 5, on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, of the Sustainable Development Goals and for a gender-responsive implementation of the entire 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development. Implementation of the new Agenda called for the strengthening of national structures and mechanisms for gender equality and women's empowerment, which should include support for and expanded collaboration with women's organizations.

10. Participants highlighted laws, national action plans and development strategies, as well as gender-responsive budgeting and programming, that were in place to support gender equality and women's empowerment. Many stakeholders were working to end violence against women and girls, which remained a major challenge. Work to address the situation of children, rural women, women and girls with disabilities, migrant women, indigenous women and older women was also discussed. Women's role in national reconciliation after conflict was stressed. Efforts to enhance equal pay for equal work and work of equal value and to provide parental leave were noted, and the need for the private sector to comply with existing provisions was stressed. Collaborative work to improve nationality and family law was mentioned. Participants emphasized the need to reach all women and girls, in particular those left furthest behind and especially those subjected to multiple forms of discrimination.

11. Speakers stressed the importance of awareness-raising with regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The role of the United Nations and the Secretary-General in the promotion of gender equality was commended, and a call was made for a woman to be appointed the next Secretary-General.